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MEMORIAL ODE
AND OTHER POEMS

ALPHONSO G. NEWCOMER

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MEMORIAL ODE

(Read at the Founder's Day exercises, March 9th, 1894.)

No LIFE is lost, one says; no man's work dies
Utterly; none that looks upon the skies
But leaves some record as secure as they
From death and death's decay.
Lo, this is fate. Put forth thy strong hand where
Men labor in Time's garden-plot to-day,
Eternity shall find the impress there.
And haply this may be.
But one says, Nay, there is naught that abides.
Time is a wide unfathomable sea
'Neath whose recurrent tides
Are swallowed up all things implacably.
This rock-built earth whereof man makes his home
Is less than the sea's foam;
The galaxies of stars that seem to him
Perdurable as time, like bubbles swim
Upon its surface and like them will burst;
Yea, time itself that swallows up all these
Must yield in turn, the last lost as the first,—
Must sink whence it arose,
Flow backward whence it flows,
Into eternity's soundless shoreless seas.

What may be true? Is life less full or fair,
Does deeper darkness gather o'er men's eyes
Than when our fathers importuned the skies
For light withholden there?
The sun shines warm to-day as yesterday,
The green grass fails not when the rains return,
And ivy twines about the burial urn,
And summer winds through leafless branches play.
Hearken, by day, by night, and thou mayst hear
Ascending ever one unchanging tune,
The voice of all earth's choristers a-croon,
The world-song low and clear.
No age hath listened for this song in vain;
Though one voice dies another swells the strain,
And Homer calls and Shakspere answers *Here!*
And loss is balanced by unfailing gain.

Yet there is loss. The splendid perfumed rose
That blooms to-day within thy garden-close—
Ah, like it is but is not yet the flower
Thou wovest once in one fair maiden's hair
To shed its perfume and its splendor there
And crown love's supreme hour.
And though this rose as that be fair and sweet,
Yea, though all rose-delights in this rose meet,
Too well, too well thou knowest it hath no power
Save in a mocking vision to recall
Youth's vanished festival.
Ay, there is loss. Though rose return for rose,
Somewhither each one goes

Nor comes again in its own form and hue;
And love that springs from dead love's urned repose
Makes not the old joy new.
Ah for this transitory human life,
Where at the last all strivers cease from strife
And over them and theirs is cast the spell
Of death's *Irrevocable!*
Where unto them that have so nobly striven
For heaven's best boon, behold what boon is given:
A little time of hopes and joys and fears,
A little sound of music in their ears,
A little light upon their eyes and then
Darkness again.
Prayer shall avail not to avert this doom;
For man and all that man's hand fashioneth
Shall find within the wide domain of death
An unremembered tomb.

But hold! The eyes of men
Made keen with penetrating through the veil
Behind which matter hides it from our ken,
Have found, past all doubt's mockery to assail,
An immortality within the clod,
An essence that shall live unchallenged on
Though the live light of sunlit heaven should fail
And earth wait vainly for one darkling dawn,—
Perchance incarnate God.

Pent in the silent caverns of the earth,
Scarce stirred since the world's birth,
Or brought where the rains nourish, the sun warms,
To gather vigor of the sun and rains
And pass through thousand Protean forms
Of blade and blossom, stone and beast and tree
And man's supremacy,
Through change unchanged this essence still remains.

The essence? Are the forms abolished then?
Not so; these too abide,
As in the ocean's tide
Abides forever the high curling crest
Though filled with all unrest
And molding crestwise ever and again
New waters gathered in its wanderings wide
Upon the ocean's breast.
Nay, not the clod alone,
The gross dense matter whereof worlds are made,
Hath life beyond this life of light and shade—
The form it clothes is deathless as God's own
And was not born to fade.
What hand so cunning can destroy one line
Of God's deep-wrought design?
Shatter the dew-drop globed upon the grass—
The fragile globule flies
To thousand atomies,
Yet each retains the outline of the mass
And sphered perfection lies.

Or loose a feathered arrow from its place—
Thy straightening bow forgets its bended grace;
But upward turn thine eye
And mark against the sky
Thy flying shaft the bow of beauty trace.
The fair proportions of the Parthenon
Untouched by time live on.
The Coliseum's springing arches spread
Above thy reverent head.
What though worlds perish? Other worlds shall sweep
Their paths appointed and their contours keep.
What though men die? Espied or unespied,
Somewhere their forms abide.
For though thou tread from us where death unbars
The way, withdrawing thy dear face, and though
We moan *Not here! Not here!* somewhere we know
In lines of light outstreaming past the stars
Thy living lineaments glow.

Death is but dissolution of life's bond.
For soul and body strive a little space
To run together in the equal race,
Until one calls and one does not respond
And death bids both give place.
Body and soul go thenceforth each his way.—
Fair Helen was but is no more, we say;
And yet we know that somewhere Helen's dust
Sleeps in the silent earth,
Or wakes to flower-bright birth,
Or panders still to man's insatiate lust.

And Helen's beauty, like a bale-fire set
On Skaian-portal, holds us spell-bound yet.—
Beneath the pavement of Ravenna lies
All that remains of him whose bitter fare
Of alien bread sustained him to endure
The apocalypse that blasts our weaker eyes.
The human soul laid bare.
All that remains? Nay, Giotto's penciled truth
Hath given over to immortal youth,
Unmarred by grief's and exile's signature,
Fresh with life's morning-kiss,
The clear grave face that looked on Beatrice.
And so he lives, dissevered soul and sense.
Yet such dividual life were naught,
But that each poet's dower
Gives him creative power
To eke out nature's poor incompetence
And justify his hour.
For his transcendent vision recombines,
Refining still away
What imperfections marked them for decay,
The crumbling earth and fleshless pictured lines
Of Giotto's cunning. Yea,
Divining half from what the live hands wrought
With impress large and strong,
And half from what the living accents taught,
He pieces out the whole—
Conjecturing the soul
From the soul's deeds, the singer from the song—
Till recreate, life's laurel round his head,
Lo Dante's self, immortal, perfected.

A poet's dream? Ay, so.
Yet who shall say or know
But to such supreme ends
All nature's travail tends?
Matter in countless forms we see,
Forms clothed in matter endlessly;
Each combination lives
What life its union gives
And dies because its bonds imperfect be.
Is it too strong a vision for men's eyes,
That struggle yet with tears,
To see, beyond their day of doubts and fears,
On some far highland of the future rise
The crowning warrant of these laboring years?

For such will rise, be sure—
A creature fair and pure,
A creature brave and bright,
Mighty with God's own might,
Made perfect to endure;
Wherein are met in marriage strong and sweet,
That ever strive to meet,
Body and soul, each for the other made,
Each glad and unafraid,
Merged in one essence final and complete,
Self-centred, fed with free and painless breath
And clear of time and ignorant of death.

. . . . . .

Upon the new world's westward seaward slope,
Where eager eyes catch color from the dawn
And flash back radiance of half-risen hope,
Where life may drink at founts still unwithdrawn
And breathe with respiration large and free,
A marvel springs to meet the morning. See,
Between the great sea's utmost inland surge
And rising hills that shelter from the sea,
In a glad land whose seasons melt and merge
One into one and bring all wondrous things
That sad lands wrest but from reluctant springs,
All flower and fruitage of earth's largess, stands
This latest wonder, as divine as they,
Albeit the fabric of weak human hands,
Clay shaped by kindred clay.

The hills deny it not: dull red and gold
Against their vivid verdure and the blue
Of farther mountains rising fold on fold
Enrobed in haze of heaven's diviner hue;
The valley takes, as one that takes his own,
These stately splendid simple walls of stone,
Broad for the sunlight's blessing, low to keep
Close fellowship with earth's great heart alone:
Mute majesty of guardian towers, and sweep
Of arcades gleaming afar in pillared pride,
And beauty of binding arches multiplied.
Oh fair, surpassing fair, however viewed!
We marvel that the very stones disclose
The spirit of their builder's amplitude
And manhood's deep repose.

Ah, there is something here
More than these outlines clear—
Within this body some warm breath,
Some life within this stony death.
For faith and hope have builded here their shrine
And wait here for a sign
That on some far horizon must appear:—
Hope that some watcher shall descry the goal
Of all this cosmic travail, faith profound
That knowledge does not tread one ceaseless round
But climbs from star to star and pole to pole.

Mark then what threescore years and ten may do.
For threescore years and ten ago was born
The child that into such large manhood grew
As noon gets seldom promise of the morn.
Ah that such manhood should be lost and leave
Bowed hearts of men and women here to grieve
Where most he wrought. Yet here is balm; for lo,
This same strong manhood taught us how to weave
Joy of bereavement's very woof of woe,
Putting our manhood to the proof of tears
Wherethrough hope's rainbow shines across the years.
O mighty soul that trampled sorrow down,
Triumphant where the fallen are thickliest strewed,
Receive this greater than a laurel crown,
Man's deathless gratitude.

To-day we stand where thou canst stand no more
As once thou stoodest, stand and sadly gaze
On all this relic of thee, till before
Our grief finds words the grief is turned to praise.
Ah sore-tried heart that in its sorrow turned
To one that with its own heart's-anguish burned,
And gathered strength to quench the sorrow's fire;
Ah hands that faltered not when heart's love yearned
For some memorial of its dead desire;—
How are men taught that death is not so strong
But love may rescue something from his wrong!
And thou, whose heart and hands so labored here,
From whose dead hope a thousand living spring,
What song but song of praise should reach thine ear
As love's high offering?

Here, by thy steadfast creed
That reach of human deed
Is bounded but by God's immense,
Immensurable beneficence,
And by this stone memorial of thy trust
That man is more than dust,
We consecrate us to the work of need.
Here let us add our little to thy large,
Till mortal clay, molded to perfect form
And with the breath of God's own life made warm,
Shall stand, godlike and fair, on heaven's bright marge.

TO MRS. JANE LATHROP STANFORD

On her seventieth birthday, accompanying a Copley print of Abbott Thayer's Caritas presented by President Jordan and others.

To you, beneath life's reddening sunset ray,
Seeing what visions with reverted eyes!—
Hope, joy, and anguish, boundless sacrifice,
And faith triumphant on the Dolorous Way;
To you, in sign of all words cannot say,
Thankful at least to know your sorrow lies
Safe locked now with the dead years' sanctities,
This friendly token let us bring to-day.

For us, still sorrow that your years creep on;
For you, but gladness. The world's claim is quit—
Fulfilled, and nobly. Happy, who can sit
At eventide and look back to the dawn
Saying, *Not empty has the day withdrawn.*
Wait for the sunset; peace comes after it.

August 22, 1898.

STANFORD MEMORIAL CHURCH

TEN years ago we saw it lie
Fair in the ward of hills and sky
As some gold bar of sunlight thrown
Across the valley's emerald zone,
Yet knew not all the dream he dreamed,
The master, on whose fancy gleamed
That day a vision of walls and towers
Fair beyond any dream of ours.

The master passed. But dreams abide
To work their will on dreamless clay;
And lo, around us here to-day,
In form and feature glorified,
The clay to noble service passed,—
His dream, her dream, sure deed at last.

For Build, he said, and Build, said she,
Build strong and fair, build fair and free,
Until the uneasy heart shall see
We build not here for earth alone;
And though we shape the senseless stone,
Shapen, it shall a symbol be
Of things to sense itself unknown.
Knowledge is good, fair is Truth's face,
Nor shall they want their dwelling-place,

With servants to keep wide the door
And swept the chambers. Yet, oh more,
Immeasurably more than these
Are Heaven's inscrutable mysteries
Whereof the earth-born craves a sign.
Build then for them a fairer shrine.

Once, twice, the word was sealed with tears.
    Oh mystery of human power,
    Transmuting still its darkest hour
Into a light that down the years
Sheds utter radiance. From their deep,
Unsunned, undated quarry-sleep,
By love's Orphean music drawn,
These stones have taken beauty on;
And beauty, born of the heart's cry,
Is the last thing the world lets die.
Knowledge is good, truth's face is fair,
    Yet love, well taught of hope and faith
    To look beyond earth's fairest wraith,
Still turns a wistful countenance where
Abide, all beauty of truth above,
Immortal loveliness and love.

Up then, ye walls of stone, that climb
Unto this ministry sublime,—
From pictured apse and pillared nave,
Past organ-loft and architrave,
Roof, gallery, turret, spring and slope
Of dome and spire toward heaven's cope,
And there, in all men's sight, uphold
The witness of your cross of gold

That Knowledge shall not win so high
But Faith and Hope still star the sky.

Ah, splendor of visions yet beheld
    Of men as in the long ago
    When Phidias, Michelangelo,
Their bronze and marble credos spelled.
And Time, that puts no stain upon
Saint Peter's and the Parthenon,
This humbler fane, doubt not, shall take
And clothe with honor for their sake
Who built it, shrine and dome, to be
A message and a memory,—
Sundawn and sunset, night and noon,
Through all the seasons' changing tune,
Until how many hundred years
Swell the long tale of smiles and tears,
Abiding still to show what gleams
Of glory crossed our darkling dreams.

Still, as adown Time's crowded aisle
The eager generations file,
Shall fair young lives of man and maid
    Still flit, like swallows, out and in
    The shadows of these towers and win
Strength of their strength, and unafraid
    Go forth into the outer din.
Yea, and perchance at the strife's end,
    When they are weary of the strife
And strength is no more left to tend
    Upon the flagging pulse of life,

O'er eyes that in far lands grow faint,
On ears that listen for a knell,
Shall steal a glory of blazoned saint
And fall a note of chiming bell,
And they shall dream of calm that fills
A vale by Palo Alto's hills,
And watch once more the twilight flee
O'er mountains by the Peaceful Sea.

February, 1902.

JANE LATHROP STANFORD

Died at Honolulu, February 28, 1905.

No message had the lark that with the sun
Rose, welcoming another jocund day,
And poured the trebles of his roundelay
For sheer joy of the springtime just begun.
No message had the lilacs, one by one
Bursting to beauty on the purpling spray.
Yet was the silent message on its way
That told our bodeless hearts thy day was done.

At last, at last, from the long, tireless quest
Of love and labor, sacrifice and pain,—
Hope but a mourner in sad Memory's train,—
At last, in that far city of the west,
Beside the lingering sunset, the release
Thou wouldst not ask for comes and brings thee peace.

March 1, 1905.

THE OLD AND THE NEW

INDULGE me till the mood be past.
We'll rest. My brain is in a tangle,—
The stone walls rise so thick and fast
About the quiet old quadrangle.

How quick it ages! Ten years' sun,
With shifting forms and faces fleeting,
And lo, the thing is deftly done,
And Newness comes with haughty greeting.

And we—ah, flag we in the race?
Else why these moments atrabiliar?
So like a stranger's seems each face
That once, and here, was most familiar.

For Doctor Jordan's stooping now,
And Gilbert's head is almost shiny,
And what is this about my brow?
And—can it be the air tastes briny!

No, I but dream. We will not let
Time practice here his old illusion:
We are all young. And yet— and yet—
These new walls work a sad confusion.

I cannot catch some notes that rang
    Clear then ere Youth and Hope grew sager;
I miss the songs that Shirley sang,
    The carolings of Carolus Ager;

I miss the shouts that swept the field
    When Clemans ran or Downing tackled,—
The flush of victory unconcealed,
    The wild acclaim of lips unshackled.

And ah for days and hours serene
    Of drowsy lab and droning lectures,
With only noisy bells between
    To start the tourist's vague conjectures.

The good old days of lend and spend,
    When courtesy was never prodded,
When everybody was your friend
    And everybody smiled or nodded;

When profs held "evenings" on the Row
    To keep their Eastern memories "greeneh,"
Or if good fellowship ran low
    Slipped softly over to Encina

Where twinkled Gale's and Campbell's lights
    An invitation warm and rosy,
Where Mrs. Comstock read o' nights
    To chocolate-sipping circles cosy,

Where Anderson dwelt near the stars
With thoughts and fancies idly vagrant,
While Woodruff's contraband cigars
Made all the purlieus faintly fragrant.

Oh careless, free, Arcadian days,
Still innocent of pomp or prestige—
How fast they vanish in the haze
And leave but memories for vestige!

All is gone by now, long and long,—
The cloister's peace, the campus glory,
And Kennedy's goals are but a song,
And Zion's wiles a fading story.

The grapes have swelled the wine-vault's store,
Laid is the ghost of *tuum meum;*
And Palo Alto trots no more,—
His bones are set in the Museum.

No more the Senator rides past
With hand on cane and gray eye gleaming;
His dreams are taking substance fast,
But he sleeps sounder than all dreaming.

And Swain and Sampson, Griggs, and Laird,
Like friends that greet you and are gone,
Have one by one somewhither fared
And I sit musing on this stone.

Enough! The golden past was ours;
Ours too shall be the future golden:
New walls, new arches, tiles, and towers,
We'll make you one yet with the olden.

January, 1900.

PLATO PASSES

THEN saw I in my dream how all
The train was filled with these—
Sharp-eyed smooth-shaven men, who smoked
And passed their pleasantries;
And Plato took his seat as one
Distinctly ill at ease.

At length, "Where go these crowds?" he asked
Of one who scanned the news
By him, "And why?" The reader paused,
Then answered in a muse:
"They play the city's daily game,
The game of win or lose.

"You stake your all on a wise guess"—
"All what?" "All that you prize,
Gold, houses, lands; and if you win
You may the world despise."
"And if you lose?" The stranger smiled:
"It shows you are not wise."

Then Plato mused in turn. What prate
Was this of wisdom? Nay,
Knew he not Wisdom's face of old?
Walked he not Wisdom's way,
Her priest and prophet unto men?
Alas, was he *passé?*

Again he to the stranger turned
As fain some way to seek
Out of the maze that puzzled him—
"These are hard words you speak.
Tell me, may not a folk be found
Whose language is plain Greek?"

The train had stopped. The stranger caught
A glimpse of distant walls,
And pointing, said: "They say that Greek
Is spoken in yon halls.
I know not." Straightway Plato rose:
"Farewell, the daemon calls."

The palm-lined path allured his steps;
A runner past him sped,
Bare-legg'd, bare-armed: "O goodly sight!
'Tis as of old," he said.
And keen with pleasure grew his face,
Elastic grew his tread.

Moreover, by the bright stone walls
One with a golden key,
Greek-lettered, welcomed him: "You come
At a good time," said he;
"We meet to-day to speak of things
You wot of. Come with me."

Then saw I in my dream a band
Of folk that took their way
Into a quiet room where men
Were wont to preach and pray,
And Plato entered with his friend
And sat in peace as they.

And when the band was gathered, one
In modest garb arose
Who held the sage's eyes with words
Born of deep thought's repose,
And won his heart with maxims such
As only wisdom knows.

And still, as followed truth on truth
That glanced at man, and God
In man, and love, and virtue's law,
And paths in duty trod,
Down to the clear and earnest close,
Plato would nod and nod.

Then rose another. "What is he?"
"A poet." "Oh, profane!
'Tis a false tribe—let us not hear!"
But Plato urged in vain.
The poet promptly drew his scroll,
And thus began his strain:

A bard stood in the market-place,
A cry was in his ears,
The burden of an anguished race
That wrestled with its fears.

'O golden age,' so rang their cry,
'Past is it, or to come,
And never present? Sage, reply!
Bard, wherefore art thou dumb?

'Too well we know the age of gold,
With Mammon for its lord,
When all things fair are bought and sold,
And all men hoard and hoard.

'But still beneath the load we grope
Toward somewhat unattained,
And hungry go the hearts that hope
For manna never rained.'

Then spake the bard: 'In vain ye flout
The age, for lo, the sin
Is yours who blindly look without
When you should look within.

'Peace dwells beside the spirit's founts.
Forego your quest, and own
The poet's simple creed, who counts
The dreamer wise alone.

'He looks not after wealth that flies;
His acres are not spread
To sun and rain; his treasure lies
Not in the earth you tread.

'But in the hidden land of dreams
He hoards his priceless store,
Where all is gold that golden seems
And glitters evermore.

'For him, from flashing globe to globe
Love's deathless music thrills,
And flowers of quenchless beauty robe
Earth's everlasting hills.

'For him the Argo's wreathèd prow
Cleaves ever-radiant seas;
For him the golden age is now,
Here his Hesperides.'

So rose the poet's fervent song
And died. I looked to where
Plato still sat. I could not see
His face, but on his hair
The soft light fell; and my dream closed
With Plato nodding there.

EPILOGUE

to above, read at the succeeding banquet.

Plato looked up and blinked: "By Pan,
"I've been asleep," said he,
"And dreaming. Looks like a plain case
Of too much poetry.
And what the plague was it about?
'Twas English all to me.

"I tried to follow, and I think
Some rhapsody I heard
About how dreaming puts men wise;
Then everything grew blurred.
Well, none can blame me if I took
The fellow at his word!"

And lurks no moral in this song?
Forsooth, when things look serious,
And dons and doctors drone so long
Their adjurations weary us,
Just take a nap—you can't go wrong,
And you *won't* go delirious.

WINTER IN SANTA CLARA VALLEY.

Look up through leafless branch and spray;
The sky spreads lowering and gray
From east to west, with scarce a glow
Where the noonday sun in the south is low.
The earth lies muffled in the snow.
And hark, upon the icy air
A tinkle of bells comes—listen!—where?—
So faint, so faint—
The dream is gone!
A blackbird twitters on the lawn;
The sun has failed not since the dawn.
And roses nodding by the sill,
And poppies gathering on the hill,
Cry "Summer, Summer, Summer still!"

November 28, 1903.

CUI BONO?

A cry across the years—from hearts wrung dry,
From lips that yearn toward life and lips that die,
Clear through the whole world's indiscriminate wail,
One soul-convulsing, hopeless, querulous cry—

All lands have voiced it and all ages heard,
Up from the depths where mind and sense are blurred,
Where darkness gathers over failing eyes
And hands grope blindly, this reiterant word—

"*Cui bono?* Wherefore? Unto what good end?
We build us temples and the storm-blasts rend,
We raise up altars and the lightnings smite
And our prayers find no gracious god to friend.

"We take up arms against the ranks of wrong,
We battle with the cruel and the strong,
And lo, for guerdon of the fight we get
Scorn and derision from the heartless throng.

"We sift one truth from out the world of lies
And carry to our fellow-men the prize,
And lo, we get for our toil's recompense
Envy and hatred from the would-be wise."

So cry they ever from the haunts of care,
From gloom of disappointment and despair,
Strong souls that find no burden upon earth
Save man's ingratitude too great to bear.

Cui bono?—Socrates before the stand
Of judges quailed not, and with steady hand
Took up the cup of hemlock in his cell
And drank death calmly at the law's command.

But friends clung round him sorrowing to see
The noblest of their teachers die as he
That died through hate of them he fain had served,
A victim to their blind fatuity.

And well they might ask, weeping, of the worth
Of all his strong endeavors upon earth
To win man's liberation from his chains,
The bonds that bound him from his spirit's birth,

If this were the conclusion, if men spurned
The ransom that he offered them and turned
Their shafts of malice against him whose soul
Only for their soul's exaltation yearned.

And one before him upon Aetna's height
Stood under the Sicilian stars' calm light
And pondered upon hope's ineptitude,
Choosing his portion in the eternal night.

"Joy and the outward world are dead to me"—
So spake he, musing. Like a whelming sea
The past rushed down upon him and he saw
Or deemed he saw his life's futility—

The days when robed in purple he had trod
Through Agrigentum's streets like some great god
And men spake, marveling, "Behold the man
Who hath all Nature subject to his nod!"

Yet these same men came to him and besought
To know the magic spells whereby he wrought
Such marvels, but derided when he told
Of wisdom and the magic power of thought.

Wherefore he turned from them in very shame
Of spirit, and upon the mount of flame
He gave his life back to the elements
And left behind a story and a name.

One later, greater than these great-souled twain,
Took up the task of thankless love again;
And lo, he found his kingship on a cross,
Thorn-crowned, the sovereign of a realm of pain.

Yea, he who claimed God's warranty to try
To win the world's redemption, God's most high,
Cried in the anguish of one supreme test
A very human, agonizing cry.

In that brief moment of his faltering faith
He called upon his God with broken breath
"Why hast thou me forsaken?" and there came
Across his sight the darkling mists of death.

So died they whom our latter day holds great,
Not in the majesty of high estate,
But burdened with the whole world's scoffs and scorn
Until they sunk beneath the crushing weight.

So died they, seeing not at all as we
With history's light upon our eyes can see,
That time would quit them for their earnest toil
And bring forth good if any good there be.

They sat amid wrecked hopes and baffling fears
And, looking backward upon barren years,
Asked of their worth but found them answer none
And died with men's gibes ringing in their ears.

Must it be so forever? Nay, not *must;*
We gather wisdom slowly, yet we trust
This lesson has been learned, if only this,
That man's deeds are not buried with his dust.

Cui bono?—Ask not of the men that were;
They set green garlands on a victor's hair
And when the laurel faded this same quest
Thou mak'st they made between a curse and prayer.

They labored at the loom of time with might,
But getting the design not all in sight
What marvel if they scanned the unfinished web
And failed to read the colored woof aright?

Cui bono?—Ask not of the men that are;
They have no answer for thee. They unbar
The gates of fate and stand as thou dost now,
And question of the future from afar.

But turn unto the records of the past.
There wilt thou gather how no man forecast
What good should follow on the least deed done,
And doubt not such things shall be to the last.

Or search thy soul. It may be thou wilt find
Some faith that sees where other sight is blind;
Some strong conviction of a goal to win
Albeit its glory is but half divined.

Cui bono? This—that what thy works have won
There is no power underneath the sun
To change or hide forever, nor shall age
Put any slight or shadow thereupon;

This—that the universal good is thine,
That thou must look beyond the narrow line
Of thy scant life's horizon till thou see
The point where all lives center and combine;

And chiefly this—that when the ages fill
The balance up of counter good and ill,
Thy deeds, not lessened by the lapse of time,
Shall turn the scale, perchance, as thou couldst will.

June, 1887.

BEYOND THE PALE

THIS way, this way,—nay, no scruples!
What! afraid of the mere sight?
There are things to see quadruples
Man's inherent virtue-mite.
Stuff? Believe me. Why man, bless you!
Taints the soul each foul laystall?
Brush against a Cyprian's dress you
Get some lint-leavings, that's all.

This way then. . . . The bright lights dazzle;
Down the floor the waltzers go;
Fumes of hot-house flowers, sweet Basil—
Ah, the death's-head's near, below!
What? That "Danube" strain's entrancing?
Certes—Sense reigns—right you are.
See that dark-eyed houri dancing?
She is Sense's queen—*devoir!*

Stay you—I was only jesting;
You are free to fawn or fleer.
Save your dignity's divesting
—If it's worth the saving—here.

We'll be gone soon. Yet a minute—
Look there floating down the *bal;*
There's a face—you might have seen it
But this morning in the mall.

Lordly then and gracious, brutal
Now you think it—but you err;
That's the gas-effect, inutile
For a man's interpreter.
Judge it when God's light's attendant,
Right you may be—no, not *must;*
'Chance the soul is yet ascendant—
Souls are souls still, bodies dust.

Not your doctrine? Well, no matter,
We'll not quarrel: men are men,
Souls *and* bodies, be the latter
Soiled or sinless.—Look again,
In that group there, by the mirror,
There's a girl might turn your head;
Gods, what beauty! Let's go nearer.
No? You heard then what she said?

And your judgment—I can guess it:
All her beauty now is—null.
But is that fair? Burns a cresset
The less brightly in a skull?
And this girl's soul, as you've read it,
Mars her comeliness? Retract!
Give the body's beauty credit—
All things can't be all infract.

No offense! But beauty's beauty,
    Flesh or spirit, masked or bare—
Soot can make the silver sooty
    Only on the surface. There,
We'll go out now since it hurt you
    Just to hear that Phryne curse . . .
Ah, this cool air's best for virtue!
    But has that air made you—worse?

March, 1887.

COUNTERPOISE

I—WEEP? Oh, sir, you do not know;
I have not wept since one glad hour
Well-nigh a score of years ago—
The memory of it hath such power.

The birds were waking to morning-song
In the glade. "O sweet, but grant me this—
I shall never make moan my whole life long,
No matter what follows upon the kiss."

I said that and she laughed—but turned
And gave me her lips and her heart and her soul
For one brief hour till daylight burned
Above the hilltops.—My faith keeps whole.

March 29, 1887.

PALINGENESIS

"A glass of white champagne if you please,
And quickly."—Heavens! how my brain reels!
Strange that such ghastly images
Should haunt one till he well-nigh feels
That he is going mad. All day
They've hounded me through the thoroughfare
And driven me here at last to bay—
"Ah, thank you; yes, just set it there."

Delicate, faultless, feminine hands,—
White as lilies I used to cull,—
Too languid to hold the jeweled bands
That load them. See! the wine looks dull
Beside the sparkling of that ring;
I wonder what purchased it, love or gold,
Or another shameless, nameless thing—
To think of it makes one's blood run cold.

Perhaps the face has something to tell—
Beautiful, ay, but scarcely blithe—
One dreams of seeing such faces in hell
Wreathed round with fire till they writhe and writhe.
Am I dreaming now? No, this face laughs—
God! what a tale that laugh has revealed!
Curled lips—I could better bear their scoffs;—
I know my heart's-blood is nigh congealed.

But wine will warm it. Why, this cup
Is strangely like the one I grasped
When the first wine-draught was lifted up
To my lips by other hands gem-clasped.
The gems still sparkle, they say; and her hands—
Nay, ask the grave-worm. What if she saw
My soul from the heaven where her soul stands,
Would she shrink to think of the hell-worm's maw?

Horrible thoughts are these that rise—
But the wine, the wine! See how it seethes!
One almost fancies a serpent lies
Coiled at the bottom, and quietly breathes
Till the bubbles mount and float to the brim.
But what are these shapes my eyes define?—
Moving forms in the goblet's rim,
Mirrored clear in the depths of the wine.

Bright lights aglow in a banqueting-hall
Where revelers reel—but the lights grow pale—
For a fierier light is alive on the wall—
Letters of flame—and the cowards quail.
Belshazzar shall never drain his glass;
On Babylon's throne a Mede sits crowned;
Thus do earth's powers and princes pass,
Drowned as this scene in my wine is drowned.

But another succeeds it—wreck upon wreck!—
A gilded galley afloat on a stream,
And a queen recumbent upon its deck
With face more fair than a dreamer's dream.
A Roman matron heard of that face,
And cursed the beauty (small marvel, too)
That in Antony's heart usurped her place—
She died therefrom, if the tale be true.

But why should I gaze till the play is played?
It hurts my eyes; and the tale is old—
Power and a possible crown betrayed
By a harlot's kisses and wine and gold.
Things greater than crowns are sold each day
For less than a life of ease by the Nile—
I have heard of a man who bartered away
His soul for a wanton woman's smile.

Such things have been; nay, such things *are*—
But why do I muse on these horrors to-night?
The maid behind the painted bar
Stares at me as if half in fright.
Does she suppose I am really mad?
Not drunken, no! for my lips are dry,
And not one drop of aught have they had
Since late last night when I meant to die.

Or was it two, three nights ago?
For all it killed not (cursed boon!)
The drug was potent—how can I know
How long I lay in that deadly swoon
Before the sun fell on my face
This morn, and I staggered into the street
To walk all day till in this place
I've dragged at last my aching feet!

My head aches, too. No wonder, when
I've seen reënacted here in my wine
The drunken orgies of women and men
Whose sins are centuries older than mine
And alive to-day, though their lips are dumb.
I'll gaze no more in the pale champagne
To find such phantoms. Whence should they come?
Mirrored, of course, from a feverish brain.

The poison left it so. I thought
When I drained the draught the fever would sleep.
So long had I set all shame at naught
I deemed life little enough to keep
And fain would have taken it. Lo, the end!
No end at all. Fate bids me begin
To weave anew what Time shall but rend,
To tread in the same old paths of sin.

But why the same? Vice-haunted paths!
Foul with all things unutterable!
Choked with Death's scythings, swaths upon swaths,
Down, down, to the utmost, nethermost hell!
So far I followed them—yea, to this
Last, darkest deep, when I gladly hurled
Me headlong into the blind abyss
To emerge, if at all, in another world.

What if it were so? Nay, why not?
Between me and those perilous ways
The great gulf yawns—were they once forgot
Might life not come upon fairer days?
It may be. Yet could I bear anew
The Pharisee's sneer, the skeptic's scoff?
Nay, who shall say what a man can do
When his soul has shaken its shackles off?

But here comes Hebe to take my glass—
She'll be surprised to find it undrained.
How tired she looks! No doubt the lass
Finds aught but roses in her lap rained.
A strange life, her life! serving wine
To men whose souls are—leprous-white;
For money too.—"Ah, here's the coin.
No, thank you, I'll not drink to-night."

PANTHEISM

(*Improvviso*)

I AM the grave-grass. Rest you here.
For, so you shed no tear,
How should I care that am so soft and green,
Made for your head to lean
And rest, that no more finds sweet rest
On softer breast?

She was your life? And you lost her:
Your life runs underground,
From springs you know not, unto deep-water
You cannot see or sound—
Your life is ebbed and gone,
With her withdrawn.

Have you no hope? None: or you would
Not come here to the grave
And cry upon its solitude
Because it does not save
What, saved, you could not keep so sure
As graves endure.

Foolish! Is life less life, you ween,
When that it changes form
And color, turns from red to green,
To cold from white and warm?
Could you but clear your eyes and see
Right, I were she!

1894.

QUESTING

WHAT wouldst thou, soul, that wilt not let me be?
Must we go forth into the world again
To follow through the haunts of strange-eyed men
Shapes that elude us, shadowy forms that flee
Unclasped forever? Why resume this quest?
Shalt thou win rapture or shall I win rest?

Lo, I have given thee what a man may give:
Strong wine of life from grapes of youth and love,
Desire and all the sweet sharp pangs thereof,
Delights that die and agonies that live.
Must struggle on until thou win at last
Delight that lives when agony is past?

Yet ponder, soul. When thou shalt be unbound,
When thou shalt fling aside this earthly me
And out upon eternity's tide swim free
With song about thee and light of heaven around,
Wilt cry not then as thou hast ever cried,
Stung with the old desires, *Unsatisfied!*

December, 1891.

BACCHANALIA

(à la Swinburne)

COME with the cymbals, come with the pean,
Nymph and Bacchanal, maiden and boy,
Drink for to-night of the draught Lethean,
Fill your souls with the fullness of joy.
Away with the cares that corrode the heart,
Leave off all things wheresoever thou art,
Phocian and Thracian and far Cytherean,
The hopes that hunger, the griefs that cloy.

Come with bodies unbent for pleasure,
Minds unburdened with weight of wrong,
Feet alive to the triplicate measure,
Hearts attuned to a Siren's song.
Come and partake of the foaming wine
That is crushed from the grapes of the crowning vine,
The grapes that have yielded their whole heart's treasure
To make men happy and high gods strong.

The floor is swept for the dancer's tread,
Come, ye nimble and fleet of feet;
The fruits are gathered, the feast is spread,
Come ye, bring ye desire and eat;
The rich red wine is foaming up
To the beaker's brim, in the brimming cup,
Feast till your souls be satiated
With all things goodly and all things sweet.

See, they come from the hills and valleys,
The heights of heaven, the hollows of earth,—
The Faun from the mountain, the Nymph from her palace
Under the fountain, the river's birth.
And the great sea pours from his couches of sand
Naiads and Nereids out on the land,
And lo, as aloft I lift my chalice,
They throng around me in madness of mirth.

"Evoi, Evoi!—
Shouting the song,
Evoi, Evoi!—
Swelling the throng,
Evoi, Evoi!—
Dancing along."

Around, around, with a joyous bound,
See my Bacchanals go.
Around, around, like a fleet-foot hound,
No flitting form moves slow.
Around, around, to the cymbals' sound,
And the music's liquid flow.
And the white feet twinkle, the bright arms gleam,
The shining locks from their shoulders stream
As the dancers move through the maze like a dream
Beneath the cressets' glow.

The wan lips redden, the dull eyes brighten,
The nostrils quiver with quickening breath,
The feet of the revelers leap and lighten
With the fire of the draught that lighteneth.
Aloft, aloft, with the drink divine,
Laugh and quaff the mercurial wine
Till the faint blood quickens, the pulses brighten,
With love of living, defiance of death.

The dull eyes brighten, the wan lips redden,
The color mounts, where the pallor is fled,
Flushed hearts throb harder for life that were leaden
And fleet feet follow the Bacchanal's tread.
On, my Maenad and Bassarid, on!
Nymph and Naiad and Satyr and Faun,
On with the dance and the mirth till ye deaden
Each pulse of pain in your veins that is fed.

. . . . .

The wind upheaps and the wild rain levels
The fallen leaves on the forest-floor;
The Thracian storm-blast rends and dishevels
Mountain and meadow and vale and shore.
But the wine-god sits alone by the streams
And his withering ivy-crown droops as he dreams
Of the midnight orgies and mad sweet revels
That have been once but shall be no more.

1885.

LOSS OR GAIN

I HAVE lost her just on the verge of possession:
A word misspoken—the only, first—
And we are parted beyond regression.
Is it best or worst?

Black is her hair, black, beautiful, splendid,
Black are her eyes, too, yea, 'tis confessed,
Just for a man's life's ruin intended;
And her soul's—like the rest.

So then we are parted, and I am—sorry?
Nay, glad, I think, when I think at all.
What should I do, who have hoped for the starry
Heaven, to fall?

And what at best would have been the gain of it?
A brief term's sweetness, and then—ah then!—
A whole life's bitterness—there's the pain of it—
Till Death's "Amen!"

By which gain's loss I am truly winner.
I shall go my way—let her go hers.
But who is the saint and who the sinner?
As your creed prefers.

She sins in deed which I have never
Who have sinned in thought which she does not.
So draw the line, dissect, dissever,—
I take my lot.

March 6, 1886.

MUTABILITY

TURN back with me: A space of frost,
Three months of snow, then wind and rain,
Blossoms and roses, ripening grain,
Brown leaves upon the crisp air tossed,—
The year has run its round again!

Your patience. Let me talk. Sit here,
Upon this grass, beneath this tree,
Let my head lie against your knee
As once of old, as then last year,
When neither guessed what things should be.

How we were happy! Blue sky-gleams,
Paling to rose, flushing to red,
While blood of sunset dyed the dead
Day slain ere we roused from our dreams
To find the night risen lord instead.

That was—one year ago: so long!
So much that has been is no more.
We sit upon this river's shore
And listen vainly for the song
That voiced our hopes that night of yore.

"Some day, some day,"—I half recall
The singers' words—"some happy day,
Ere love grows old and life grows gray,
Ere sunlight wanes and shadows fall,
Our joy shall blossom, Sweet, some day.

"Some day, O Sweet, some happy day"—
Ah for the burden of that song!
"While hearts are light and hope is strong,
Our love shall find the perfect way,
Some day, O Sweet, ere long, ere long."

What of the singers now? Who knows?
They glided past us in the gloom
And vanished. What light shall illume
Their path thereafter or disclose
If their joy ever came to bloom?

I talk of others, not of us!
It had not been so once, last year.
What boots it now? You do not hear,
And though your hand lies prisoned thus
In mine, there is no tremor here.

So all things change. This very grass
Is like but is not yet the old;
The woodland wears not last year's gold,
And on the river's breast, alas!
Strange voices float, new hopes unfold.

And what of us? Oh joy's eclipse!
The starlight trembles but not you;
The grass-blades quiver with the dew
That kisses them, but on your lips
No kiss of mine may thrill anew.

What care? And yet, for all I know
That hours must fade and passion range,
New loves grow old and cold and strange,
I would some things kept always so,
I would that not all things did change!

September, 1887.

BALLADE OF LIGHT LOVES

BETWEEN the rains and the roses we met.—
"Oh lend me your heart, fair maid, I pray,
And I'll lend you mine till the May be set,
For a springtime space till summer gain-
- say."
But the maiden laughed: "Not I; nay, nay!
There's an old song of love and regret—
This lending of hearts is perilous play,
One will remember though one forget."

"And that is your fear, my dear fillette?
Nay, make we merry while youth holds
sway,
Nor let old songs and sayings fret"—
Thus lightly I laughed her fears away.
Oh dream of love! Oh joy to stray
Down paths with never a thorn beset!
Oh happy hearts!— But alackaday,
One will remember though one forget.

Ay, time hath wings no love can let,
And the spring and the maiden went their
way;

But the maiden paid not back the debt
Of my heart she borrowed in early May.
A year and a year is it now, and gray
The skies are grown and the woodlands wet—
Alas that I should have lived to say
One will remember though one forget.

Comrades, take heed in your pastimes gay:
Light loves may come at your call, and yet
Beware, beware! in an after day
One will remember though one forget.

1887.

RONDEAU

A RUINED rose—I hold it so
  Up by its broken stem, and lo!
  In fibrous heart and shredded sheath
  The record of my lady's teeth
Who frayed it thus an hour ago.

I asked too much it may be, though
She needed not such meed bestow,
  Nor to my wounded heart bequeath
    A ruined rose.

But Time will even all, I know;
And when a few more years shall show
  Fair maidens gleaned from hall and heath
  To round up Beauty's changeful wreath
My lady proud will lie below,
    A ruined rose.

December, 1885.

AUBADE

My song is my heart's message. Oh for art
To wing it with the wind of imminent morn
And waft it to the chambers of thy heart,
Lest it die futile ere the day be born.
What should song do unheeded? disavow
Its loving ministry that no vexed ear
May grudge it guerdon? Aye; but thou, wilt thou
Let love plead now arrear
Nor wake nor hear?

The moon that set an hour ago, yet leaves
A trail of waning splendor in the west;
The earth stirs softly, and the broad lake beams
With mirrored stars set gemlike on its breast;
The night-wind whispers to the long low grass
Of fragrant islands in some southern sea;
The heron's hoarse cry comes from the morass;
Shall these things pass and we
Not hear or see?

O love, fling wide the lattice ere the stars
Shall follow in the moon's wake, set or die.
Already up the east faint aureate bars
Glow harbingers of dayspring in the sky.
Sweet the acacia sheds its scent for us,
And sweet the hedge-flowers blossom down the row,
And the sweet jasmine twines half amorous—
Sweet are these thus although
None see or know.

Yet let not sleep keep these delights from thee;
Youth's glory like the night's will soon be spent
When all delights as one to us shall be
And one end of them all—evanishment.
Awake, arise, and shame the tardy sun;
Thy queenship over all the flowers declare
Lest in the pride of their own beauty none,
While slumbers one more fair,
May know or care.

But soft, my song, she comes! O passionate heart,
Hush thy loud beatings lest she hear and flee
And the dawn coming see our light depart
So sweetly more than dawn or day to me.

Nay, love, shall scorn usurp thus song's demesne,
Or ever love love's singing weary of?
For how should I let thee, crowned my heart's queen,
Graciously lean above
Nor care nor love?

April, 1891.

"THE DEWS LIE THICK"

THE dews lie thick in the meadow-grasses,
And heavy with perfume and faint with love
The cowslip kissing the hare-bell's stem
Shivers and shrinks from the wind as it passes
Sweet as the breath of a maiden above,
Soft as the touch of her garment's hem.

The rivulet sings through rustling sedges
Tall rushes and leaves of lilies outspread
But I, close down to the mother's breast,
I can well see past the ragged edges
Of tangled grasses and weeds overhead
The moon's sharp sickle grow pale in the west.

I hear, close couched to the warm earth's bosom,
The song of the stream and the sigh of the wind
But my heart is as dry as the dust of the plain
Shriveled and shrunk as a blighted blossom,
And my voice grown shrill with age and thinned
Pipes ever in answer a plaintive strain.

O meadow-grasses, O fair marsh flowers
O runnels of water and waifs of wind
I pray you listen, the night is long.
Though the sun has sunk on my singing hours
My breast is oppressed as a heart that hath sinned,
My soul can only find solace in song.

"SIT CLOSER, SWEET"

Sit closer, sweet, 'tis growing dark;
I scarce can see your face
And the great trees look gaunt and stark
About this lonely place.
Sit closer till I see your eyes'
Blue heaven and glad cheek's glow
Once more before the daylight dies—
Sit closer, closer—so.

I know the color is not gone
From them although the night
Has stooped in jealousy and drawn
Her veil across my sight.
I know it well for still I feel
Your heart beat fast as when
An hour ago you felt me kneel
Beside you in this glen.

We knelt beside the spring to quaff
Quite other draughts, and yet
We saw our mirrored faces laugh
And lean until they met.
What if my arm forgot its place
And stole around your waist?
What if my hand with graceless grace
Upon your heart was placed?

I felt it beating wildly then,
    I feel it beating now—
Bow down your golden head again,
    Lift up your lovely brow.
The spring no longer mirrors us
    Its face has grown quite blind
But do not think 'twould shame it thus
    To see us twain entwined.

EERIE TIME

WHEN the clock strikes ten and the lights go out
And the folks come up to bed,
And Uncle John quits shuffling about
In the attic overhead;
And the dogs begin to bark at the posts,
And the night-owls call to the elves,
Then back in the walls I know the ghosts
Are ready to stir themselves.

They peep to see if the coast is clear,
And then step cautiously out,
And nod and whisper so I can't hear,
But I know what they're about.
They are going to play their games again
Of Catch-me-if-you-Can,
And Tag-across-the-Counterpane,
And Hide-and-Find-your-Man.

They never stop to open doors
For fear a hinge might creak,
But glide right through the walls and floors—
What funny Hide-and-Seek!
And they never laugh or speak out loud,
But when the hall-stairs crack
I know some ghost has tripped on his shroud
And fallen and hurt his back.

Then I snuggle closer down in bed
So I can't hear the wail
Of the little squeak-mouse overhead
When a ghost steps on his tail;
While out of dreamland the fairy hosts
Come trooping, till papa calls
"Up Rob!" and I jump, and behold, the ghosts
Are all gone back in the walls.

May, 1903.

"THE BUILDERS BUILDED"

THE builders builded.
"Master of life and death,
Who holdest in thy keeping man's frail breath,
Who hast his competence to give and take,
His hunger to appease, his thirst to slake,
His towers of promise to uphold or raze,
Grant me, I pray thee, some meet measure of days
While I upbuild me here before the sun
A goodly lordly palace that shall be
Most fair for all men's eyes and lips to see
And praise me building." So one saith, and one,
With head bowed down upon his suppliant knee,
"Master, thy will be done."

"Lo, Master, here are gold and glass and sand
Laid ready to my hand,
And in my heart a high unfaltering trust!
Mark while I build from out this terrene dust
A structure that shall witness and withstand
Time's ravages and rust
And be to thee a glory and a grace
To thy poor slave that comes before thy face
Preferring prayer," another saith; and one,
With head still bowed in suppliant wise upon
His knee, made orison:

"Good Master, if it be that so thou art willed,
Grant me some space ere my life's space be filled,
Some little time ere my time's sands be run
And my work-season done,
To make this worthy of thee that I build."

The days fell fast of sun and wind and rain
That brought brief change upon the patient plain,
Swift supersession of the dawn and light
And noon and dusk and night.
And sunrise upon sunrise, moon on moon,
Saw through clear air or broke through cloud
and mist
Where their first rays and the last mist-strays
kissed,
To find, all hours and seasons, late or soon,
Sundawn or plenilune,
With plumb and trowel in either tireless hand
The builders building on the level land.

No rains of winter and no winds of spring,
No heat or blight that summer and autumn
bring,
No dearth of gladness and no gloom's excess,
Could quench the ardor in their hearts that
burned
Or sear their spirit's vigor; nor discerned
They of unwavering resolution less
Nor more of weariness

In the strong souls that planned, the hands that
wrought,
Than to a man's impermanent lot may fall,
Being mortal and not made for godlike thought,
Being death-foredoomed and not for life at all.

So without pause for rest or rest for pain
Right manfully they labored till there rose
Heavenward upon the fair broad-breasted plain
Three marvels such as man's poor magic shows,
Three dazzling diverse structures. Sheer and tall
With square-cut base and vertical smooth wall
That swerved not from the plumb-line half a
hair
One shot into the thin blue upper air
Tower-like, and the eye following found no flaw
In its most fair proportions, only saw
A straight bright shaft of white pure polished
stone
That lifts its lofty head
Above the sand-drift of its basal bed
Most like some pillar of heaven that stood and
shone
A stately splendid thing
Made for earth's glory and man's marveling.

More humble as with less aspiring crown,
Yet far surpassing it in matchless grace
The second held its place
Upon the level of the low sand-down.
Glitter of gems and ivory and gold,
And crystals manifold

That turned the superstructure into flame,
Marked it for admiration from afar
Like some transplendent scintillating star
Set upon earth to shine against the sun.
Story on story widening upward rose,
Each richer and more radiant than the last,
Nor might the keenest wondering search disclose
More for support to the erection vast
Than a mere pivot-point which scarcely seemed
To touch the earth beneath it, till one deemed,
So delicately poised it stood amid
The light and splendor round about it cast,
He gazed upon some fair
Inverted and enchanted pyramid
Swung by an unseen potent spirit there
To float forever in the ambient air.

And what of him that had so humbly prayed?
His spirit had not faltered, nor had stayed
The hands that strove to work the spirit's will.
And yet they wrought, albeit they wrought with
skill,
No marvel such as those that stood beside
Magnificent in pride,
No glittering show of meretricious art,
But fashioned in some simple, chaste design,
Of perfect symmetry in every part,
Of classic grace in every curve and line
A temple and a shrine
In outward symbol of the builder's heart,
Gleam of white marble shadowless and pure,
From massive plinth to broad entablature.

AT SEA

(January 4, 1913)

PART merges into whole
Here where abideth free
The universal soul
And time has space to be.

GIBRALTAR

EXULT! the grey Atlantic
Is left behind at last.
Rejoice! the shores romantic
Loom dimly thro' the vast.

And is that dark Gibraltar?
Oh brighter, closer grow!
Lo, there was Ammon's altar!
Lo, here is Gades! Lo,

These are the very portals
Of that old sea of doom
Where mortals and immortals
Have labored at the loom

Of life for ages, weaving
  What ages still shall rend,
Till love shall cease achieving
  And hope and fear have end.

O shores of man's endeavor,
  O shrines of gods o'erthrown,
O sea whereon forever
  The winds of fate are blown,

Be still within your giving
  Some gift to us who cry,
To make us richer living,
  Nor leave us loth to die.

Exult! the grey Atlantic
  Fades like a troubled dream—
While shapes of shores romantic
  On the horizon gleam.

See, there is dark Gibraltar!
  Oh brighter, brighter grow.
And here was Ammon's altar!
  Ceuta! Gades! Lo.

January 11, 1913.

CAPRI

HERE rest and dream. The waters rest,
The boats scarce rocking on their breast.
The cloud rests on the purple crag;
And the long hours of noonday lag,
As if the sun himself would rest
Above this Island of the Blest.

Home of the fabled Sirens. Home
Belovèd of the lords of Rome,
When cares of empire heavy prest
Upon the hearts that longed for rest
As sweet to Caesars as to us,—
Augustus and Tiberius.

Not ours their burdens. Yet have we
Sought too this island in the sea,
Resigning life's more ample powers
To dream awhile among its flowers,
And watch the sun slope to the west,
Brief sovereigns of a realm of rest.

March 21, 1913.

SORRENTO

(Hotel Lorelei)

Improvisation

On the Lorelei's terrace lounging,
While the warm sirocco blows,
Oh the lazy life we're leading
In the name of earned repose!

Darkly blue Vesuvius rises
Eastward o'er the olives gray;
Naples shimmers on the shore-line
Far across the wind-swept bay.

Out to westward Ischia slumbers;
Round the headland Capri lies,
Jewel of the fairest circlet
Underneath Italian skies.

So the spirit-soothing visions
Round about us group and close,
As we loiter in Sorrento
And the warm sirocco blows.

March 26, 1913.

ALBERGO SANTA CATERINA

Amalfi

A door in a gray, blank, windowless wall
That winds along the street.
Pass through and feel life's burdens fall,
Disbanded, at your feet:
Saint Catherine's peace is over all
Within this still retreat.

Your back is turned upon the throng;
Before you the sky and the sea,
And a terraced garden where all day long
The orange-flower woos the bee,
And the wild canary stills his song
In the shade of the carob-tree.

The sea calls low, or the sea calls loud;
The terraces spread to the sun;
Or the rain-drops fall from the lowering cloud
Till the iris-cups o'errun.
And winds may pipe, or winds may cease—
It matters not what befalls,
When over the spirit hath stolen the peace
That dwells in Saint Catherine's walls.

April 2, 1913.

CANTO DELL'AMORE

(Carducci)

I KNOW not how, but all my thoughts to-day
Come winged in splendor of the sapphire's hues,
Thro' all my veins I feel the poignant play
Of sighs that earth and the glad heaven diffuse.
Every new sight doth, like a wave restored
Of ancient feeling, my warmed bosom move,
And my tongue cries out of its own accord
Unto the earth and heaven, O Love, O Love.

1907.

AVE MARIA

(Carducci)

AVE MARY! When on the air of evening
Steals the low-voiced sweet salutation, mortals
Meekly bare the brow and bow down the forehead,
Dante and Harold.

Slowly floats the melody, as of soft flutes,
Passing by unseen between earth and heaven,—
Spirits peradventure that were, that are now,
Spirits that shall be?

Gently o'er life's weariness draws oblivion's
Veil; a pensive sighing, a tranquil longing,
Ev'n an impulse sweet unto tears, to weeping,
Steals on the spirit.

Husht the brute creation and man and all things;
Sunset's rose fades out in the darkning azure;
Still the lofty undulant summits murmur,
Ave Maria!

1907.

PETRARCA: IN MORTE

LII.

I FEEL mine ancient air; I see draw nigh
The blessed hills where that fair light arose
That kept mine eyes, while Heaven such bounty chose,
Ardent and glad, now sad and never dry.
Oh perishable hopes! Dreams born to die!
Withered the grass, turbid the water flows,
And empty and cold the nest of her repose
Wherein I lived that longed in death to lie,

Hoping at last to win from her soft plaining
And the fair eyes that made my bosom burn
Some respite from this sorrow's ceaseless paining.
I have served a lord of cruelty and scorn—
Who burned of old, before my bright fire's waning,
And now above its scattered ashes mourn.

1896.

LIII.

Is this in truth my splendid phoenix' nest
Where first her plumes of gold and purple gleamed,
Whose wings meet shelter for my poor heart seemed,
For whom my words and sighs are still expressed?
O primal root of my so sweet unrest,
Where is the beauteous face whence the light streamed
That kept me alive and joyful while it beamed?
Sole upon earth, in heaven now art thou blest.

And thou hast left me here, grief's eremite,
Returning ever to the spot by thee
Made consecrate and honored in my sight.
Ah dark with gathering night the hills I see
Whence thy soul took to heaven its final flight,
And where thine eyes made day of night for me.

1896.

LIV.

Now hast thou shown thine utmost power at once,
O cruel Death, now hast thou in an hour
Made poor Love's realm, and Beauty's light and flower
Hast stripped and shut within the narrow sconce;
Now hast thou life despoiled of all it owns
Of ornament and honor's sovereign dower.
But fame and worth defer not to Death's power:
These are not thine—keep thou the naked bones.

The rest be heaven's, that by its shining clear,
As by some brighter sun, is glorified,
The rest on earth in good men's thoughts abide.
Be thy heart conquered in its victory's pride
By pity of me, new angel in that sphere,
As mine was conquered by thy beauty here.

1896.

LXXXIX.

Stray little bird that on thy way goest singing
  Or haply wailest for the hour grown late,
  Beholding night and winter at the gate
And the bright season swiftly backward winging;
Knewest thou, as well thou knowest the deep woes stinging
  Thine own heart, so my not unlike estate,
  Thou'ldst fly unto this breast disconsolate
And share with mine thy cries of sorrow's wringing.
I know not if like griefs by us be borne,
  Since she thou mournest still may living be,
While envious Death and Heaven leave me forlorn:
  But the sad hour and surging memory
Of all the sweet and bitter years outworn,
  Bid my heart cry in pity unto thee.

1896.

DANAË'S LAMENT *

(Simonides)

And while she lay within the carven chest,
Rocked by the soughing winds and troubled waves,
Fear crept into her not untearstained cheeks,
And clasping Perseus closelier round she spake:—

"O child, what woes are mine! Yet thou sleep'st sound.
In infant heedlessness thou slumberest
Within the bronze-nailed chest,
While lampless night and darkness swathe thee round.
Nor though the washing brine bedew thy hair,
Takest thou care,
Nor though the wind lift up its voice aloud,—
Face to my face, wrapped in thy purple shroud.
Not fearful unto thee the name of Fear!
Else wouldst thou to my words lend readier ear.

"Yet sleep, my babe, I bid thee sleep, my child,
And sleep, ye waters wild;
Sleep, mine insatiate woe!
And grant, O father Zeus, some respite come
Out of thy mercy. Nay, too bold I know
This boon I ask, past justice to bestow:
I pray thee, pardon me, my lips are dumb."

*From a volume of translations from Pindar and other classic poets now being collected.

FROM THE JAPANESE.

I

Hokku

A voice
Hito-Koe-wa
(was it) moon (that) called
Tsuki-ga nai-ta-ka
the cuckoo
Hototogisu

I lookt to where the cuckoo sang,—
O moon, was yours the voice that rang?

II

Waka

The cuckoo
Hototogisu
singing in the direction
Naki-tsuru kata-wo
(I) looked
Naga-mu-re-ba
only of the dawn
Tada ari-ake-no
the moon being there
Tsuki-zo nokoreru.

Forth I went at the cuckoo's cry.
I saw the bright moon in the sky,
But nowhere saw the singing bird.
O moon, was yours the voice I heard?

III

Old Love Song

From thee parted (I)
Kimito wakare te
pine-grove as I passed
Matsu-bara yuke ba,
pine tree from dewdrops whether
Matsu no tsuyu yara
tears whether
Namida yara.

When I roam the wood at evening
And the pine-trees drip with dew,
Oh the dewdrops from the pine-trees!
Oh the tear-drops shed for you!

DEC 22 1913

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